

# Print on Demand

October 2004

## What is Print on Demand?

Print on demand (POD) is a printing technology that allows books to be produced one or two at a time or in small lots, rather than in large offset print runs. The GPO is exploring the use of POD technology to broaden its title offerings, to ensure lasting availability of publications, and to avoid the heavy expense associated with surplus inventory.

## Benefits of Print on Demand for Federal Depository Libraries

For over a year, GPO has discussed the possibility of providing a POD allowance for depository libraries to be used as a tool to augment depository library collections with paper versions of depository titles. GPO is still in the process of evaluating different options but one possible scenario is that the depository library could use an allowance to quickly order and receive a printed copy of a publication regardless of its item number. The policies being developed for use of a POD allowance may permit libraries to order multiple copies, replacement copies, or to supplement item selections with print publications that are of interest. A POD allowance might make the selection process of some print titles from GPO more like using a book dealer. For example, libraries would not have to guess in advance what titles will be issued under certain item numbers and then take everything issued under those item numbers. They could wait until the items are issued and then order only the titles they actually want.

POD technology is also being looked at as a way to produce tangible copies of titles that are not otherwise available to the Federal depository library community in print. These items would have to be suitable for replication using POD technology - which means that they have to be within certain standard sizes, not contain excessive color or artwork (such as a coffee table art book), or any other attributes that are not suitable for the POD equipment. Since many of these titles would not otherwise be available to Federal Depository Libraries except in electronic form, POD would provide an option for obtaining printed copies for a tangible collection.

GPO has been testing potential vendors to see exactly what capabilities are practicable now, as well as those coming in the future. The results have been quite encouraging in most cases and the ability to deliver quality reproductions through POD is available to take advantage of right now. The goal for the application of POD in the FDLP would be to offer POD publications as close to the original quality as possible, without sacrificing the ability to use the information. Quality access to authentic Government information remains an essential goal to GPO and will always be considered in the deliberations of how POD could be used to benefit the FDLP.

## Print on Demand Survey

GPO conducted a survey of Federal depository libraries from September 8 to 27, 2004 to help gauge the future demand for print on demand (POD) publications. The survey presented two different hypothetical scenarios and enabled GPO to gather data regarding the level of interest for a representative sample of potential POD publications. For the purposes of the survey, the cost of each title was the estimated POD sale price, less a 25% (book dealer discount).

To complete the survey, GPO asked depository librarians how many copies of each publication they would choose for their depositories under the following two hypothetical scenarios:

1. How many copies of each publication would the depository select if each depository was given an annual allowance of \$500.00 for POD publications?
2. How many copies of each publication would the depository purchase with its own funds after the annual allowance of \$500.00 was exhausted?

## POD Survey Results

The Print on Demand Survey received a total of 402 unique responses from depository libraries which represents roughly 31% of the total number of libraries in the depository community. A representative sampling of 100 titles was listed on the survey in order to determine the types of items that libraries might have an interest in if they were printed on demand. Every title on the survey generated some selection activity from library respondents. For some of the titles, libraries expressed an interest in acquiring multiple copies for their collections.

### Survey Respondents by Library Type

Type of Library	# of Respondents
Academic General	230
Public Library	79
Academic Law	43
State Library	20
Community College	11
State Court	6
Special Library	5
Federal Agency	4
Federal Court	2
Medical Library	1
Agricultural Library	1
Service Academy	0
Total	402

### Top 10 Titles of Library Interest (sorted by # of Libraries using allowance)

Print on Demand Title	# of libraries that selected titles using an annual allowance of \$500.00 for POD publications	# of libraries that selected titles for purchase using own funds after the annual allowance of \$500.00 for POD publications was exhausted
<b>Crime in the United States (Annual)</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics (Annual)</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Health, United States (Annual)</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Condition of Education (Annual)</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (Annual)</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Safeguarding Privacy in the Fight Against Terrorism Report of the Technology and Privacy Advisory Committee, 2004</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth (Annual)</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>World Population Profile (Biennial)</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Demographic Trends in the 20th Century</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Gangs in Rural America: Final Report to the National Institute of Justice, 2001</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>104</b>

The complete real-time statistics may be viewed online at :  
[http://www.gpoaccess.gov/pod/pod\\_stats.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/pod/pod_stats.html).

### Additional Information

Please feel free to contact Bill Grennon at [wgrennon@gpo.gov](mailto:wgrennon@gpo.gov) if you have any questions concerning print on demand.